# March Comes in Like a Lion

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Chapter 28

# Blinding Darkness

and instantly,

I came back

to my senses.

—With those words,

I looked at the board

SHALL WE

CONTINUE?

*I cannot continue.*

*That's how bad this is.*

*The first thing I felt was shock–*

*And then, I was overcome by burning*

***embarrassment.***

did I think this man was–?!

Up until a minute ago,

what kind of person

Who the hell do I think I am?!! "I musn't get nervous"? Just how badly did I misread this person?!

I musn't get nervous.

He'll latch onto that.

What the hell?! "Those kinds of people"?!!

I'M NOT GOOD WITH THEM...

MY GAMES WITH THOSE KINDS OF PEOPLE GET REALLY LONG.

I CANNOT LOSE HERE. NO MATTER WHAT.

I just wanted to win, so I played a type of shogi where I was prolonging the game, waiting for my opponent to make a mistake.

In my head, I'd reduced my opponent to his "rank".

Provoked by another A-class player, I brushed him aside as if he were a mere minor character.

I let my mind be overtaken by a grudge.

Without even understanding the "ability" of the opponent in front of me,

Am I that stupid?

*It's painful!*

I've got to get away,

get away,

get away!

.....

HUFF

HUFF

HN...

コポン……

SFX: KOHO.... (GURGL...)

SFX: PASHA (SPLASH)

I... I want to run.

I want to disappear.

*It's pitch black but blindingly bright.*

*I can't breathe.*

*By simply clearing his throat there,*

HUFF

HUFF

*I knew he was telling me, "calm down".*

to find a move...

and tried...

SFX: PACHI (TAP)

SFX: PACHI (TAP)

and my mind in chaos, I madly tried...

With that prod,

SFX: PACHI... (TAP...)

but he had sat through it all, quietly.

This man not only saw through all of it,

and that I'd only just now realised it and gotten abashed–

that fact that I'd been practically belittling him

And I realised,

If I simply ran away in the middle of the game just because of my own embarrassment,

that would be

something truly selfish.

a battle of thoughts began.

F...

THEN,

.....

FROM WHERE

.....

チャッ!

SFX: CHA... (KER-CHAK...)

SFX: SU... (SST...)

FROM HERE.

WHY DON'T YOU TRY ADVANCING A LITTLE?

R-5h from there?!

–And so,

I continued to play, scraping together every desperate ploy I could think of.

But

achieving any recovery,

the match ended.

And then–

将棋盤

THEN,

HOW ABOUT P-5D?

From a place like this?

What manifested on the board

But...

was where the turning point had been—

It was already going wrong there?

.....

F...

FROM HERE?

TH... THEN,

IF I WENT LIKE THIS...

☗ P-1E

☖ P-1E
☗ S-3E?

☖ S-3E

☗ B-3E

☗ L-1E

☖ L-1E,
☗ P-3D,
☖ S-4B

☖ P+3B

SFX. PACHI (TAP)

AH

.....

☖ G-5D

☗ S-5D

☖ S-5D

☗ B-2D

☖ P-2D

Both in the match,

and in my disposition...

AH...

.....

I'm utterly beaten...

SFX: PACHI PACHI... (TAP TAP...)

TH-

THEN,

■ P-1E
□ P-1E

HOW ABOUT ■ P-6E?

□ B+5G

■ S-5G

□ B-3G...

TH-

THANK YOU

VERY MUCH

*My voice shook with embarrassment.*

It was all...

My reading of the game,

everything,

SFX: BA (CRASH)

*The world in front of me flickered black and white.*

.....

my own utter failure.

OOHH,

HE'S REALLY RUNN-ING.

HE MUST FEEL LIKE HE GOT STRIPPED NAKED...

AND GOT BLOWN AWAY.

BECAUSE HE'S LOW ON EXPE-RIENCE,

HE MISREAD HIS OPPONENT'S ABILITY

NO, JUST HERE FOR A LITTLE TRAINING.

I WAS JUST EXAM-INING YOUR MATCH

HUH? YOU'RE UP TODAY?

AHH, SMITH

HE SURE IS WEARI-SOME.. THAT KIRIYAMA-KUN.

I KNOW, I KNOW.

THE INDIS-CRE-TIONS OF YOUTH.

SOOO EMBARAS-SIIING.

Sigh...

AW, GEEZ...

BEFORE THIS MATCH THAT JERK.

HE WENT TO MAKE COPIES OF ONLY YOUR AND GOTOU-SAN'S KIFU.

HA HA HA

—SO, IT'S LIKE THAT, IS IT?

GOTOU-SAN HAS "20 GAMES" AND I ONLY HAVE "5 GAMES".

Hahaha

I'M RIGHT?!

MAN, THAT BRAT PISSES ME OFF...

WOOD GRAIN

WELL, I'VE DONE SIMILAR THINGS IN THE PAST, TOO.

I was never this direct about it though.

OH, WELL.

EVERY-ONE DOES THAT, I GUESS.

more or less.

THOUGH WE TRY NOT TO REMEMBER.

FOR THE TITLE.

AND GO UP AGAINST SOUYA

I WANT TO WIN...

WELL, NEXT

YEAH.

YOU'RE UP AGAINST GOTOU-SAN. GIVE IT YOUR ALL!

I WANNA WIN...

...Though it's kinda scary...

His face...

It really is frightening though... that face...

MAN, I'M HUNGRY.

WANT TO STOP OFF SOME-WHERE?

AH.

I'M A BIT...

WHAT,

A GIRL-FRIEND?

Ah, no.

It's nothing like that...

AW, GEEEEZE. GO AHEAAAD. IT'S FINE, GO.

Ah, well, thanks.

Good job today.

TEEHEE

SFX: SHISHI (SHOO SHOO)

SFX: PEPEPE (FLICK FLICK FLICK)

SFX: PIPI... (BEEP BEEP...)

HELLO, BOU?

HOW'S YOUR HEALTH HOLD-ING UP?

REALLY?

YEAH, I WON.

YES.

OH? YOU ALREADY SAW IT ONLINE?

I MIGHT HAVE RIPPED HIM APART THOUGH...

HE'S AN ODD JUMBLE OF STUBBORN AND MEEK.

—BUT THAT GUY SURE IS INTER-ESTING.

IS THAT RIGHT ...?

HOW ABOUT WE INVITE HIM

TO THE STUDY GROUP?

—MM.

I THINK I'M STARTING TO UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT.

SFX: CHUU CHUU (SMOOCH SMOOCH)

SFX: GARA GARA (RUSTLE RUSTLE)

チュッ チュッ

MMM

Wuz you such a cutiiiee?

I'm hoooome...

I'z sooo zowwy I kept yuu weit-iiing!!

Ichigo-chuwaaan!

(Because he found it in a strawberry box)

meeo...

meowww

ネコあんか。

ベットの店

SFX: DOSA... (PLAI...)

–Later, at Smith's house.

Chapter 28 end

PAPER BAG: CRUNCH CRUNCH
PLASTIC BAG: PET SHOP
BED: CAT BED WARMER